

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 570

By Matlock

A RESOLUTION recognizing Sixth Avenue Church of God on the occasion of its 100th anniversary.

WHEREAS, the many fine churches across this State constitute an institutional foundation for an orderly and just society for all Tennesseans, and their dedicated service to God and humanity is the bedrock upon which our State and nation are founded; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those venerable religious institutions and their congregations that, through their unflagging capacity for love, dedication of spirit, and faith in God, strive to enrich the lives of people in their communities; and

WHEREAS, one such dynamic and historic community of faith is Sixth Avenue Church of God in Lenoir City, whose members will celebrate the church's 100th anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, the Lenoir City Church of God was organized in 1916 in a room in the back of a building at 300 A Street. The nine charter members of the church initially had no regular place to meet, so they met in the homes of members and friends until they secured a building on Fifth Avenue to hold their services. Reverend L.C. Yates, along with his wife, served as the church's first full-time pastor; and

WHEREAS, by 1920, the small building on Fifth Avenue was filled to its capacity; Mr. P.L. Brooks purchased a building lot on Sixth Avenue and gave it to the church. After raising funds through a successful building campaign, church members erected a wooden frame building on the lot in the spring of 1921, and the church then became known as the "Sixth Avenue Church of God"; and

WHEREAS, as prosperous times came to Lenoir City with the beginning of Fort Loudon Dam, Sixth Avenue Church of God saw new growth from the influx of so many new families flocking to the first and only Pentecostal church in the area; and

WHEREAS, in September 1941, the General Assembly appointed C.M. Newman to pastor the church. During the pastorate of Mr. Newman, the church experienced its greatest growth, and a new church was constructed from 1943 to 1944 on land adjacent to the original church; and

WHEREAS, the combination of a great six-week revival in 1944 with Pastor Newman and later Sister Kinsley, a returned missionary from Africa, and the return of servicemen from the war resulted in another period of growth for the church; and

WHEREAS, Reverend W.M. Wood came to pastor in 1950, and, in 1956, he was followed by Reverend Raymond Morse, whose administration paid off the church and built a new modern parsonage and fellowship hall; and

WHEREAS, upon the resignation of Reverend Morse, his brother-in-law, Dr. R. Leonard Carroll, the former president of Lee College, became pastor of Sixth Avenue. During Dr. Leonard's pastorate, the church underwent a number of renovations; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Paul H. Walker was appointed to fill the vacancy of Dr. Carroll in 1964, and he introduced the church's first bulletin and weekly radio broadcast of the Sunday morning service, purchased a new bus, and completed a new parking lot; and

WHEREAS, following the retirement of Reverend Walker in 1966, there were several other notable pastors: Reverend Garland Griffis, Reverend F.W. Goff, Reverend Doyle Stanfield, Reverend Paul Shoemaker, and Dr. Edward Williams; and

WHEREAS, 1975 marked the beginning of the long and successful pastorate of Reverend Fred Cook and his wife, Jeanette. Several other churches were added onto the Lenoir City district during Pastor Cook's pastorate, along with the purchase of more property, including a lot for a new sanctuary; and

WHEREAS, after the transfer of Pastor Cook in 1986, the church was led by Reverend Ray Pace and Reverend A.J. Crawford until 1997, when Dr. Ernie Varner, the church's current pastor, and his wife, Angelelea, began their tenure with Sixth Avenue Church of God; and

WHEREAS, during his long and successful pastorate at Sixth Avenue, Dr. Varner earned his doctorate and founded "El Faro," the church's Hispanic outreach ministry; and

WHEREAS, Sixth Avenue Church of God is one of the great religious institutions and catalysts for positive spiritual change in our State and nation; and

WHEREAS, Sixth Avenue Church of God has stood on the rock-solid foundation of Christian belief, service, and love for one hundred years; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and commend the congregation of Sixth Avenue Church of God on the celebration of the church's one hundredth anniversary, extending our best wishes for the church's continued success and growth in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.